

973.7L63 J. Winston Coleman, Jr.

A3C67k

cop. 1, 3, 4

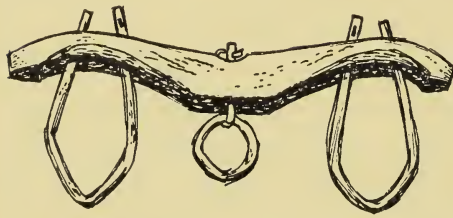
A Kentucky Lincoln-
ian: [Wm. H.

Townsend of

Lexington, KY]

(1943)

LINCOLN ROOM



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

presented by

C.3: J. G. & R. P. RANDALL

C.1: THE HORNERS

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.


A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

Reprinted from THE LINCOLN HERALD, February, 1943. Vol. XLV, No. 1
Harrogate, Tennessee



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

<http://archive.org/details/kentuckylincolni00cole>

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The story of William H. Townsend's great collection of Lincolniana at Lexington, Kentucky.

By J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR'S big bay horse, hitched to a sturdy side-bar buggy with steel-tired wheels, swung with long easy strides down the narrow, dusty turnpike a few miles from the village of Glensboro, Kentucky. The doctor's little boy—clad in a shirt of figured calico, cottonade breeches, buck-eye hat—his bare feet propped against the old, battered medicine case—sat beside his father on the vehicle's low leather seat.

At the forks of the road the doctor pulled up the big bay to chat with a farmer digging post holes in a fence row. He had just

unearthed a ten pound cannon ball, which had been fired from the opposite ridge forty years before in the bloody skirmish of Chesh-er's Store on the eve of the battle of Perry-ville. To the farmer, this find was just another piece of junk. He was quite willing to sell it—thought it "oughta be wuth a dime." As the buggy rattled off down the ridge, the doctor's little boy held the rusty relic very close beside him. A new collector had been born!

It was about this time that William H. (called "Bill" then and now) Townsend,

William H. Townsend in his law office reading Lincoln & Herndon's Illinois Statutes.



proud owner of the old cannon ball, started a scrapbook which vividly reflected his family background and environment. At the outbreak of the Civil War his two grandfathers and other kinsmen—all slave owners—had, without exception, espoused the Southern cause. The Salt River valley in Anderson County, where young Townsend lived, was thickly populated with elderly veterans of Morgan's Cavalry. At election time the village postmaster—an old Union soldier—regularly cast the one vote which prevented the Glensboro precinct from going unanimously Democratic. It is, therefore, not surprising, as one thumbs today the yellowed pages of this old ledger, that the first item Townsend pasted in his scrapbook was a picture of his boyhood idol, Robert E. Lee, and that the newspaper clippings which follow, relate entirely to published reminiscences of Confederate exploits!

It was not until 1919 that "Bill" Townsend, then practicing law in Lexington, Kentucky, purchased his first Lincoln book in a second-hand store at Asheville, N. C., a worn copy of Francis T. Miller's *The Portrait Life of Lincoln*. A year later he acquired another item: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*, by Dr. William E. Barton, and on November 16, 1920, the author received this copy through the mail, with the request that he autograph it for the owner. Little did this noted Lincoln scholar dream that some day the dedication page of one of his most important books, *The Lineage of Lincoln*, would read: "To my friend, William H. Townsend, who has traveled with me over thousands of the miles that made this book possible and who knows the labor, adventures, disappointments and occasional rejoicings which our pilgrimages extending over several years have brought."

As Dr. Barton inscribed the *Paternity* for his new correspondent, he was particularly glad to make contact with a resident of Lexington, Kentucky. He had just made a futile search in Mercer County for the descendants of Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks, the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln.

Examination of records in Washington showed that Sparrow, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, had cashed his last pension check in Lexington, county seat of Fayette County, in the autumn of 1840. By finding Mr. Townsend, a lawyer who knew the people and court records of Fayette County, Dr. Barton hoped to find the Sparrows—and so it turned out, but not in the way the Doctor anticipated.

The Sparrow records and Lincoln's maternal kinsmen were not in Lexington or Fayette County. These relatives still lived on the soil their forebears had wrested from the wilderness—that section of Mercer County which had been cut off to form a part of Anderson, when the latter county was created in 1827. For more than thirty years, Oliver L. Townsend—the country doctor—was their family physician. He had stood at the deathbeds of two of Nancy Hanks' half-brothers, one of her half-sisters and had brought into the world many of Abraham Lincoln's cousins—including one set of twin double cousins of the Great Emancipator.

It was this acquaintance with Dr. Barton and journeys with Barton back to the Sparrow country in Anderson County that definitely started "Bill" Townsend on the road to Lincoln research and the making of a collection of Lincolniana, which now numbers more than twenty-five hundred items. This collection consists of practically all the rare campaign "Lives"; letters, documents and manuscripts written by Lincoln, his partners and associates; original volumes owned by Lincoln and his law firms; oil portraits—one of Mary Todd during her girlhood in Lexington painted by her niece, Katherine Helm—one of Mrs. Lincoln's father, Robert S. Todd, by the noted Kentucky artist, Matthew Jouett, which hung in the old Todd residence when Lincoln came to visit there with his family.

There are original photographs—one autographed by Lincoln and certified by his Secretary, John Hay; another of Willie Lincoln, which Mrs. Lincoln, after his death in the White House, autographed: "Our Willie"

and presented to the picturesque Kentuckian, Cassius M. Clay; daguerreotypes — one of Lincoln's step-sister, Matilda Johnston, and her son, John J. Hall, which hung over the bed in which Lincoln's step-mother died in the old cabin on Goose Nest Prairie, Illinois; books, pamphlets, engravings and etchings, bronze statuettes, busts, plaster casts, relics, broadsides, scrapbooks—two from the famous Oldroyd collection—and other interesting miscellaneous items which overflow both the Townsend residence and his law offices.

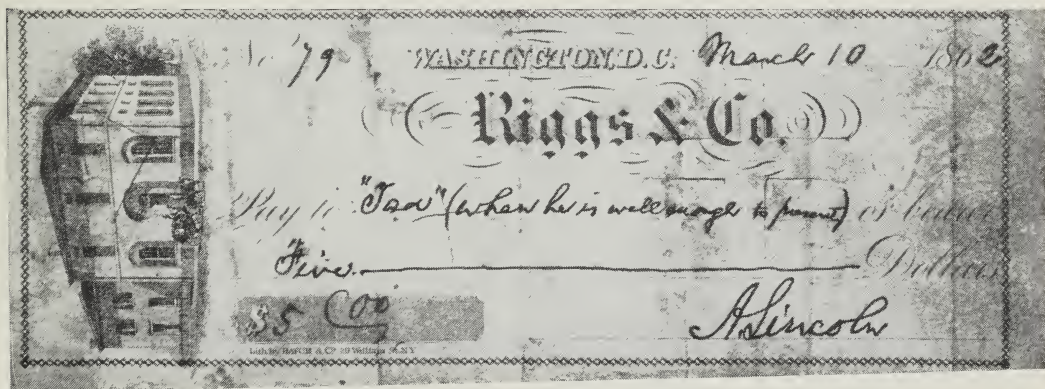
The original autograph material in this collection includes the signature of Thomas Lincoln, which is so rare that this specimen and one other are the only signatures of Abraham Lincoln's father in any public or private collection; the original deed executed by Lincoln's step-mother, Sarah Lincoln, and his step-brother, John D. Johnston, to John J. Hall, conveying the two forty-acre tracts of land about which Lincoln sharply wrote Johnston on November 25, 1851, saying: "Mother" has "already let you take that, hook and line."

Here also are the letters that Lincoln wrote his Lexington attorney, George B. Kinkaid, about the litigation in which, for the only time in his life, his personal integrity was assailed, one letter reading: "I find it difficult to suppress my indignation toward those who have got up this claim against me"; the penciled note Lincoln wrote Douglas when one of their separate speaking dates accidentally collided at Sullivan, Illinois, following the

Fourth Joint Debate at Charleston and a riot occurred between the Lincoln and Douglas factions; the letter to Kentucky's great statesman, John J. Crittenden, that Lincoln wrote the day after he had lost the Senatorial race to Douglas, which contains the oft-quoted paragraph: "The emotions of defeat at the close of a struggle in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest, and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely, are fresh upon me; but even in this mood I cannot for a moment suspect you of anything dishonorable"; and the letter Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Dezhiah Vance on June 9, 1860—his last as a lawyer—in which he says: "I never keep anybody's money an hour longer than I can find a chance to turn it over to him."

The document which Townsend cherishes above all others in his collection grew out of one of the most moving incidents of Lincoln's life in the White House. In February, 1862, the Union's darkest hour, President Lincoln's two little sons, Willie, 11, and "Tad," 9, fell ill. On February 20th, Willie died. The condition of "Tad," remained critical and Lincoln, in an agony of grief and anxiety, sat by his bedside night and day. In a few weeks "Tad" was slowly, fretfully convalescing, but the cares of state bore heavier than ever on the President's weary, stooped shoulders.

On March 8th, the armored Confederate Ram, "Merrimac," practically destroyed the Union Fleet at Hampton Roads. The Federal cause seemed doomed. On the morning



Lincoln's check to "Tad."

of March 10th, Washington was hysterical over the news that the "first battle of the Ironclads" had been fought the previous day between the Merrimac and the "Yankee Cheesebox," the Monitor. Reports of the encounter were meager and conflicting. Lincoln had snatched a few moments from the telegraph office for an important conference with a delegation from the border States concerning his recent message to Congress, urging Federal pecuniary aid to all slave States adopting gradual emancipation.

It had scarcely started, however, when the President's Secretary came in and quietly whispered to his chief. Lincoln excused himself and left the room. "Tad's" nurse stood in the hallway. "Mrs. Lincoln insists that I see you, sir," she said apologetically, "Tad won't take his medicine." Silently the President and the young woman in white muslin walked down the long corridor.

"You stay here," he said when they reached the sickroom, "and I'll see what I can do." Then he went inside, softly closing the door behind him. He was gone only a few minutes and came out smiling broadly. The old twinkle flashed again from beneath his dark, shaggy brows. "It's all right now," he announced cheerily, "Tad and I have fixed things up." Then he hurried back to his conference.

The nurse entered the room. From the depth of the pillows "Tad's" wan, little face was beaming. Clutched in his small, thin hands was a bank check which read:

"Pay to 'Tad' (when he is well enough to present) Five Dollars." It was signed: "A. Lincoln."

With this original check, Townsend has also Robert T. Lincoln's letter presenting it to Mr. C. C. P. Holden, of Chicago, on March 25, 1870. Recently the eminent Lincoln collector and authority, Judge James W. Bollinger, wrote Townsend: "I think your check 'to Tad when he gets well' is the most interesting thing yet found above Lincoln's signature. Really, if I owned it, I would not trade it for the Hooker letter. And I often think of it."

For many years there has been much speculation among Lincolnians as to the circumstances under which Jesse Weik became the owner of that vast quantity of Lincoln-Herndon manuscripts recently sold to the Library of Congress for \$65,000.00. Not long ago Townsend discovered and acquired Herndon's letter to Weik, dated June 7, 1889, which contains the answer to this long standing query. "I will sell you," writes Herndon to Weik, "all of my right, title and interest in & to the whole of the Lincoln records, including letters, evidences, proofs, affidavits, etc. etc. for one hundred dollars cash paid down. I greatly need the money or would not say cash paid down. . . . The records—the materials etc. will be of great value in the future & will be a kind of fortune to you. I have no place to keep the things—am old. . . . I said once I would do something for you and I do it now in this proposition. Twenty-five years of toil for \$100 is nothing."

The Townsend collection is particularly rich in associate volumes. They cover well Lincoln's life from those nights by the Indiana fireside to that tragic Good Friday evening at the White House. First to be noticed is the original volume which, as biographers agree, profoundly influenced the youthful Lincoln during the formative Indiana years—his first law book—David Turnham's copy of the *Revised Laws of Indiana*. In this book Lincoln read for the first time the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the first State Constitution of Indiana. Also the Ordinance of the Northwest Territory, which contained the provision: "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, other than in the punishment of crimes." Beveridge says: "Through this volume Lincoln acquired a fair understanding of the elements of law and government." Tarbell says: "He did not merely read the documents in the Revised Statutes, he studied them, pondered them, saturated himself with them."

Pasted inside of the front cover of the "Revised Laws" is William H. Herndon's

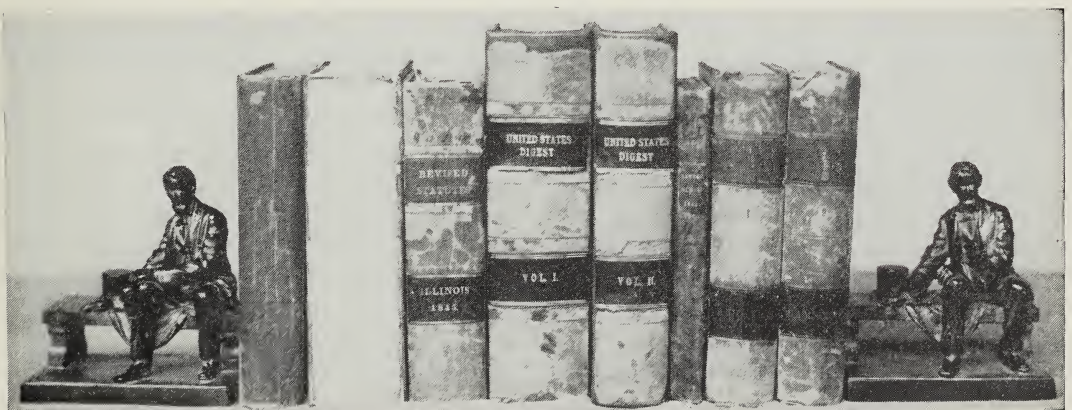
"History of this book", relating how the volume was given to him by David Turnham when "in the year 1865 I was in Spencer County, Indiana, Lincoln's old home, gathering up the facts of young Abraham's life." Laid in are three autograph letters written by David Turnham to Herndon in the fall of 1865, referring to the "old Law book that I had when Abe and I were associates."

Side by side with the "First Law Book" are half a dozen books from the law library of Lincoln & Herndon autographed for the firm by the junior partner. One of these, which also belonged to the firm of Logan & Lincoln, has a "book-mark" torn from a sheet of paper on which Lincoln has written a list of legal authorities. In addition to these law books, is the second volume of the *Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana*, on the inside front cover of which Lincoln has made notations in ink and also written: "A. Lincoln. Springfield, Ill. 1852." Another choice item is a copy of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, inscribed and presented by Lincoln to his old friend, "Capt. Job Fletcher."

When the *New York World's* correspondent sat down in the Executive office of the White House after Lincoln's funeral, he noticed three books lying on the President's desk, a parliamentary manual by Charles Lanman, and two books of humor, one by Orpheus C. Kerr and the other by Artemus Ward. The Lanman book inscribed: "For His Excellency, President Lincoln, with the

compliments of the author" and autographed on the same page "Hon. I. N. Arnold from Robert T. Lincoln. Nov. 8th, 1871," is now in the Townsend collection. Close beside this volume, Townsend keeps an envelope postmarked "Cleveland, O." and addressed to "Hon. John Sherman, U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.," which Andrew Johnson's private secretary, W. G. Moore, found on Lincoln's desk when the new President moved into the White House. Across the face of this old envelope, in a clear bold hand, Lincoln has written in ink two words, which to this day are unexplained: "*Personal Beauty*"!

Townsend is extremely wary about the admission of relics into his collection and those he has have passed the most gruelling tests of authenticity. Here one finds a white kid glove that Lincoln wore at a Presidential Reception and split at the thumb when he gave a genuine Sangamon County handshake to an old Illinois friend. It was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Jesse K. Dubois, Lincoln's Springfield neighbor, close personal and political friend and pallbearer. It was acquired from Jesse's son, Lincoln Dubois, last surviving member of the family. Other items are: A play bill of Ford's Theatre for the night Lincoln was shot, with the imprint of "E. Polkinhorn & Son"; a linen bandage used at Lincoln's deathbed presented by the President's family physician, Dr. Robert K. Stone, to Lincoln's pastor, Rev. Dr. P. D.



Lincoln & Herndon law books in Townsend Collection.

Gurley, and acquired from Dr. Gurley's daughter, Mrs. Emma Gurley Adams; an ancient wooden trunk covered with undressed cowhide, which Lincoln filled with wearing apparel and other personal belongings and carried over to the home of his wife's first cousin, Elizabeth Grimsley, a few evenings before he left for Washington in February, 1861. Upon the death of "Cousin Lizzie," it became the property of her son, John Todd Grimsley, and was acquired from him.

Another interesting relic is a large, elaborately engraved sheet of parchment in its original brown and gold frame, which certifies that: "His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln, Pres't of U. S. A., is constituted a Life Director of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This certificate was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Corp. William H. Hughes, a member of the 7th Independent Company, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, which served as Lincoln's bodyguard. This outfit kept up its organization for many years after the War, holding annual roll calls on the White House lawn. With this relic, Mr. Townsend also has Corp. Hughes' silk fringed "Lincoln's Bodyguard" badge and his honorable discharge from military service signed by Andrew Johnson, September 6, 1865.

From the size, value and rarity of the Townsend collection, one would naturally suppose that the owner had devoted to this undertaking all the leisure hours he could snatch from the law practice in which he has been all these years, and is now, so actively engaged. But the fact is, in addition to collecting Lincolniana, Mr. Townsend also has found time for research and writing which have achieved for him a notable distinction in the field of Lincoln authorship. Doubtless this love of research—this deep delving into legal archives and newspaper files, musty bundles of old letters and manuscripts—is directly responsible for the important historical discoveries which Townsend has from time to time unearthed and published. It was this relentless lawyer-like quest for facts—all the facts—that revealed the law suit in

the Fayette Circuit Court in which Lincoln so completely vindicated himself upon the charge that he had embezzled his client's money, and which also located a sheaf of his letters to his Lexington lawyer in an attic desk unopened for seventy years.

To the same methodical investigation may also be attributed the story of the arrest of Lincoln during the Indiana years on a warrant charging a violation of Kentucky law in the illegal operation of a ferry, his trial and acquittal in the Kentucky Court of Squire Samuel Pate; the vital revelation of Lincoln's firsthand contacts with the institution of slavery during his long visits to Lexington, his wife's home town; and the discovery of Lincoln's hitherto unknown affiliation with a church organization. This and other new material about the Great Emancipator have been related by Townsend in many newspaper and magazine articles and in his books: *Abraham Lincoln, Defendant*. 1923; *Lincoln, the Litigant*. 1925; *Lincoln and his Wife's Home Town*. 1929; and *Lincoln and Liquor*. 1934.

In fulfillment of a promise to Dr. Barton in his last illness, Townsend completed Barton's unfinished *President Lincoln*, in 1932 and wrote the preface. Referring to this undertaking, *The New York Times Book Review*, February 12, 1933, in its review of the book, observed: "Mr. Townsend has himself made important contributions to the Lincoln bibliography, and his present chapters have a literary distinction which calls for special praise."

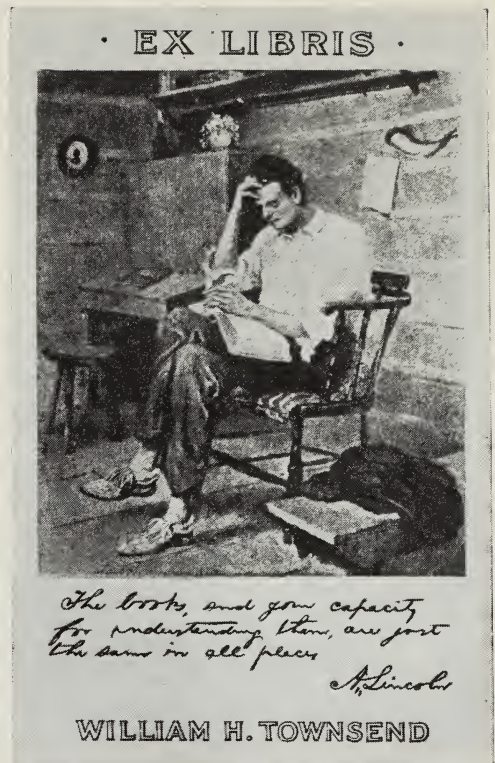
Townsend, during his years of Lincoln work below the Mason & Dixon line, has had some occasion to be reminded of the Biblical observation about the honor of a prophet in his own country. He good-naturedly accepts the "quips", of friends who know his "rebel" antecedents and his lifelong affiliation with the Democratic Party. They also "josh" him over communications which come from Republicans far and near, who—assuming Townsend to be a staunch member of their Party—invite him to make political speeches at Lincoln Day Dinners. He has

skirmished sharply and effectively, now and then, with various anti-Lincoln “die-hards” still left south of the Ohio River. And there are two persons very near his heart who have never read a line of anything he has ever written concerning Lincoln!

On a bleak winter night in the tragic ‘60’s, two teen-age girls carried their three-year old brother, Oliver, from the family’s burning dwelling—surrounded by “Yankee” Home Guards, who claimed that “rebel” soldiers had been harbored within its walls. These two aunts of William H. Townsend are still living—one 96, the other 93—but the name of Abraham Lincoln has never been mentioned once between these dear, “unreconstructed,” old ladies and their favorite nephew—the only son of their deceased and only brother. One of them has a little shoe box in which she has carefully collected newspaper references to her nephew since his college days, but there is no clipping that contains the faintest hint of his interest or authorship in the Lincoln field!

“Bill” Townsend—a natural born raconteur—with his compact build, ruddy complexion and hair now white, prematurely gray since his late twenties, is a striking figure in any group. Possessed of the keen sense of humor and warm sympathies of his Welsh-Irish ancestry, unusual felicity of speech saturated with the picturesque and forceful imagery of his beloved Salt River, he is at his best when sitting around informally with friends, depicting some colorful character of his native village or relating Lincoln anecdotes and his own adventures in the Lincoln country that he has travelled so extensively with Barton, Beveridge and other noted authors.

Townsend warmly cherishes his long friend-



Townsend bookplate. Inscription is a sentence in facsimile from Lincoln's letter, Nov. 5, 1855, to Isham Reavis.

ship with Carl Sandburg. The two get together whenever possible. After one such occasion, Sandburg writes this note: “Dear Bill—Your pint of Kentucky Tavern is not half finished, but I will remember you long after it is gone. That was a grand afternoon of talk, many fragments of it sticking close with me now. Good going to you. As always, Carl.”

Since the Great Emancipator was himself a Kentuckian, it is particularly fitting that this nationally known Lincoln scholar and his fine collection should be located at Lexington, the old home town of Mary Todd Lincoln.

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

Reprinted from THE LINCOLN HERALD, February, 1943. Vol. XLV, No. 1
Harrogate, Tennessee

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The story of William H. Townsend's great collection of Lincolniana at Lexington, Kentucky.

By J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR'S big bay horse, hitched to a sturdy side-bar buggy with steel-tired wheels, swung with long easy strides down the narrow, dusty turnpike a few miles from the village of Glensboro, Kentucky. The doctor's little boy—clad in a shirt of figured calico, cottonade breeches, buck-eye hat—his bare feet propped against the old, battered medicine case—sat beside his father on the vehicle's low leather seat.

At the forks of the road the doctor pulled up the big bay to chat with a farmer digging post holes in a fence row. He had just

unearthed a ten pound cannon ball, which had been fired from the opposite ridge forty years before in the bloody skirmish of Chesh-er's Store on the eve of the battle of Perry-ville. To the farmer, this find was just another piece of junk. He was quite willing to sell it—thought it "oughta be wuth a dime." As the buggy rattled off down the ridge, the doctor's little boy held the rusty relic very close beside him. A new collector had been born!

It was about this time that William H. (called "Bill" then and now) Townsend,

William H. Townsend in his law office reading Lincoln & Herndon's Illinois Statutes.



proud owner of the old cannon ball, started a scrapbook which vividly reflected his family background and environment. At the outbreak of the Civil War his two grandfathers and other kinsmen—all slave owners—had, without exception, espoused the Southern cause. The Salt River valley in Anderson County, where young Townsend lived, was thickly populated with elderly veterans of Morgan's Cavalry. At election time the village postmaster—an old Union soldier—regularly cast the one vote which prevented the Glensboro precinct from going unanimously Democratic. It is, therefore, not surprising, as one thumbs today the yellowed pages of this old ledger, that the first item Townsend pasted in his scrapbook was a picture of his boyhood idol, Robert E. Lee, and that the newspaper clippings which follow, relate entirely to published reminiscences of Confederate exploits!

It was not until 1919 that "Bill" Townsend, then practicing law in Lexington, Kentucky, purchased his first Lincoln book in a second-hand store at Asheville, N. C., a worn copy of Francis T. Miller's *The Portrait Life of Lincoln*. A year later he acquired another item: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*, by Dr. William E. Barton, and on November 16, 1920, the author received this copy through the mail, with the request that he autograph it for the owner. Little did this noted Lincoln scholar dream that some day the dedication page of one of his most important books, *The Lineage of Lincoln*, would read: "To my friend, William H. Townsend, who has traveled with me over thousands of the miles that made this book possible and who knows the labor, adventures, disappointments and occasional rejoicings which our pilgrimages extending over several years have brought."

As Dr. Barton inscribed the *Paternity* for his new correspondent, he was particularly glad to make contact with a resident of Lexington, Kentucky. He had just made a futile search in Mercer County for the descendants of Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks, the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln.

Examination of records in Washington showed that Sparrow, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, had cashed his last pension check in Lexington, county seat of Fayette County, in the autumn of 1840. By finding Mr. Townsend, a lawyer who knew the people and court records of Fayette County, Dr. Barton hoped to find the Sparrows—and so it turned out, but not in the way the Doctor anticipated.

The Sparrow records and Lincoln's maternal kinsmen were not in Lexington or Fayette County. These relatives still lived on the soil their forebears had wrested from the wilderness—that section of Mercer County which had been cut off to form a part of Anderson, when the latter county was created in 1827. For more than thirty years, Oliver L. Townsend—the country doctor—was their family physician. He had stood at the deathbeds of two of Nancy Hanks' half-brothers, one of her half-sisters and had brought into the world many of Abraham Lincoln's cousins—including one set of twin double cousins of the Great Emancipator.

It was this acquaintance with Dr. Barton and journeys with Barton back to the Sparrow country in Anderson County that definitely started "Bill" Townsend on the road to Lincoln research and the making of a collection of Lincolniana, which now numbers more than twenty-five hundred items. This collection consists of practically all the rare campaign "Lives"; letters, documents and manuscripts written by Lincoln, his partners and associates; original volumes owned by Lincoln and his law firms; oil portraits—one of Mary Todd during her girlhood in Lexington painted by her niece, Katherine Helm—one of Mrs. Lincoln's father, Robert S. Todd, by the noted Kentucky artist, Matthew Jouett, which hung in the old Todd residence when Lincoln came to visit there with his family.

There are original photographs—one autographed by Lincoln and certified by his Secretary, John Hay; another of Willie Lincoln, which Mrs. Lincoln, after his death in the White House, autographed: "Our Willie"

and presented to the picturesque Kentuckian, Cassius M. Clay; daguerreotypes — one of Lincoln's step-sister, Matilda Johnston, and her son, John J. Hall, which hung over the bed in which Lincoln's step-mother died in the old cabin on Goose Nest Prairie, Illinois; books, pamphlets, engravings and etchings, bronze statuettes, busts, plaster casts, relics, broadsides, scrapbooks—two from the famous Oldroyd collection—and other interesting miscellaneous items which overflow both the Townsend residence and his law offices.

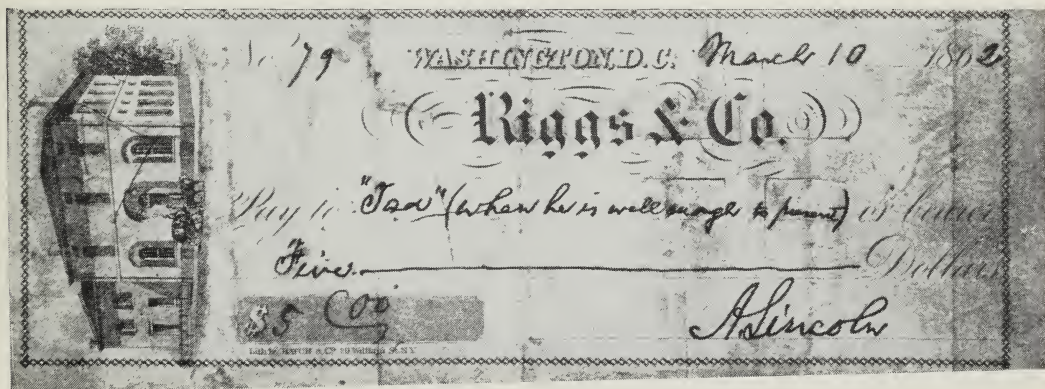
The original autograph material in this collection includes the signature of Thomas Lincoln, which is so rare that this specimen and one other are the only signatures of Abraham Lincoln's father in any public or private collection; the original deed executed by Lincoln's step-mother, Sarah Lincoln, and his step-brother, John D. Johnston, to John J. Hall, conveying the two forty-acre tracts of land about which Lincoln sharply wrote Johnston on November 25, 1851, saying: "Mother" has "already let you take that, hook and line."

Here also are the letters that Lincoln wrote his Lexington attorney, George B. Kinkead, about the litigation in which, for the only time in his life, his personal integrity was assailed, one letter reading: "I find it difficult to suppress my indignation toward those who have got up this claim against me"; the penciled note Lincoln wrote Douglas when one of their separate speaking dates accidentally collided at Sullivan, Illinois, following the

Fourth Joint Debate at Charleston and a riot occurred between the Lincoln and Douglas factions; the letter to Kentucky's great statesman, John J. Crittenden, that Lincoln wrote the day after he had lost the Senatorial race to Douglas, which contains the oft-quoted paragraph: "The emotions of defeat at the close of a struggle in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest, and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely, are fresh upon me; but even in this mood I cannot for a moment suspect you of anything dishonorable"; and the letter Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Dezhiah Vance on June 9, 1860—his last as a lawyer—in which he says: "I never keep anybody's money an hour longer than I can find a chance to turn it over to him."

The document which Townsend cherishes above all others in his collection grew out of one of the most moving incidents of Lincoln's life in the White House. In February, 1862, the Union's darkest hour, President Lincoln's two little sons, Willie, 11, and "Tad," 9, fell ill. On February 20th, Willie died. The condition of "Tad," remained critical and Lincoln, in an agony of grief and anxiety, sat by his bedside night and day. In a few weeks "Tad" was slowly, fretfully convalescing, but the cares of state bore heavier than ever on the President's weary, stooped shoulders.

On March 8th, the armored Confederate Ram, "Merrimac," practically destroyed the Union Fleet at Hampton Roads. The Federal cause seemed doomed. On the morning



Lincoln's check to "Tad."

of March 10th, Washington was hysterical over the news that the "first battle of the Ironclads" had been fought the previous day between the Merrimac and the "Yankee Cheesebox," the Monitor. Reports of the encounter were meager and conflicting. Lincoln had snatched a few moments from the telegraph office for an important conference with a delegation from the border States concerning his recent message to Congress, urging Federal pecuniary aid to all slave States adopting gradual emancipation.

It had scarcely started, however, when the President's Secretary came in and quietly whispered to his chief. Lincoln excused himself and left the room. "Tad's" nurse stood in the hallway. "Mrs. Lincoln insists that I see you, sir," she said apologetically, "Tad won't take his medicine." Silently the President and the young woman in white muslin walked down the long corridor.

"You stay here," he said when they reached the sickroom, "and I'll see what I can do." Then he went inside, softly closing the door behind him. He was gone only a few minutes and came out smiling broadly. The old twinkle flashed again from beneath his dark, shaggy brows. "It's all right now," he announced cheerily, "Tad and I have fixed things up." Then he hurried back to his conference.

The nurse entered the room. From the depth of the pillows "Tad's" wan, little face was beaming. Clutched in his small, thin hands was a bank check which read:

"Pay to 'Tad' (when he is well enough to present) Five Dollars." It was signed: "A. Lincoln."

With this original check, Townsend has also Robert T. Lincoln's letter presenting it to Mr. C. C. P. Holden, of Chicago, on March 25, 1870. Recently the eminent Lincoln collector and authority, Judge James W. Bollinger, wrote Townsend: "I think your check 'to Tad when he gets well' is the most interesting thing yet found above Lincoln's signature. Really, if I owned it, I would not trade it for the Hooker letter. And I often think of it."

For many years there has been much speculation among Lincolnians as to the circumstances under which Jesse Weik became the owner of that vast quantity of Lincoln-Herndon manuscripts recently sold to the Library of Congress for \$65,000.00. Not long ago Townsend discovered and acquired Herndon's letter to Weik, dated June 7, 1889, which contains the answer to this long standing query. "I will sell you," writes Herndon to Weik, "all of my right, title and interest in & to the whole of the Lincoln records, including letters, evidences, proofs, affidavits, etc. etc. for one hundred dollars cash paid down. I greatly need the money or would not say cash paid down. . . . The records—the materials etc. will be of great value in the future & will be a kind of fortune to you. I have no place to keep the things—am old. . . . I said once I would do something for you and I do it now in this proposition. Twenty-five years of toil for \$100 is nothing."

The Townsend collection is particularly rich in associate volumes. They cover well Lincoln's life from those nights by the Indiana fireside to that tragic Good Friday evening at the White House. First to be noticed is the original volume which, as biographers agree, profoundly influenced the youthful Lincoln during the formative Indiana years—his first law book—David Turnham's copy of the *Revised Laws of Indiana*. In this book Lincoln read for the first time the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the first State Constitution of Indiana. Also the Ordinance of the Northwest Territory, which contained the provision: "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, other than in the punishment of crimes." Beveridge says: "Through this volume Lincoln acquired a fair understanding of the elements of law and government." Tarbell says: "He did not merely read the documents in the Revised Statutes, he studied them, pondered them, saturated himself with them."

Pasted inside of the front cover of the "Revised Laws" is William H. Herndon's

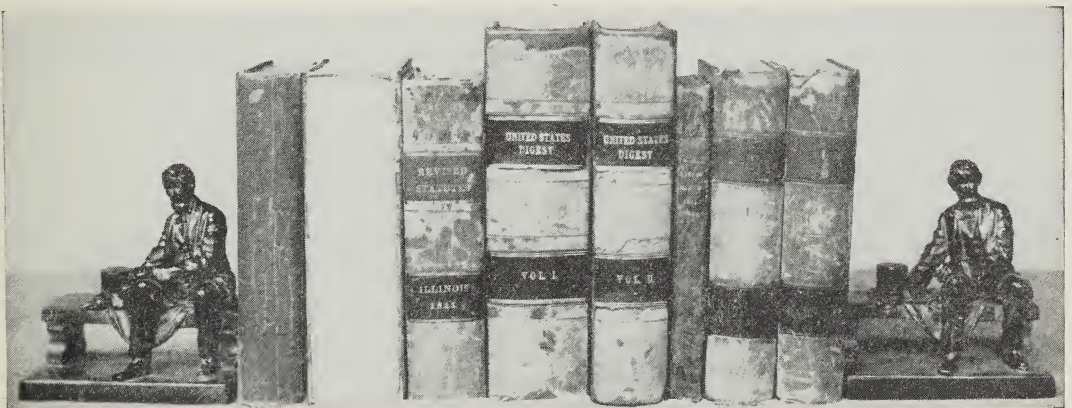
"History of this book", relating how the volume was given to him by David Turnham when "in the year 1865 I was in Spencer County, Indiana, Lincoln's old home, gathering up the facts of young Abraham's life." Laid in are three autograph letters written by David Turnham to Herndon in the fall of 1865, referring to the "old Law book that I had when Abe and I were associates."

Side by side with the "First Law Book" are half a dozen books from the law library of Lincoln & Herndon autographed for the firm by the junior partner. One of these, which also belonged to the firm of Logan & Lincoln, has a "book-mark" torn from a sheet of paper on which Lincoln has written a list of legal authorities. In addition to these law books, is the second volume of the *Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana*, on the inside front cover of which Lincoln has made notations in ink and also written: "A. Lincoln. Springfield, Ill. 1852." Another choice item is a copy of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, inscribed and presented by Lincoln to his old friend, "Capt. Job Fletcher."

When the *New York World's* correspondent sat down in the Executive office of the White House after Lincoln's funeral, he noticed three books lying on the President's desk, a parliamentary manual by Charles Lanman, and two books of humor, one by Orpheus C. Kerr and the other by Artemus Ward. The Lanman book inscribed: "For His Excellency, President Lincoln, with the

compliments of the author" and autographed on the same page "Hon. I. N. Arnold from Robert T. Lincoln. Nov. 8th, 1871," is now in the Townsend collection. Close beside this volume, Townsend keeps an envelope postmarked "Cleveland, O." and addressed to "Hon. John Sherman, U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.," which Andrew Johnson's private secretary, W. G. Moore, found on Lincoln's desk when the new President moved into the White House. Across the face of this old envelope, in a clear bold hand, Lincoln has written in ink two words, which to this day are unexplained: "*Personal Beauty*"!

Townsend is extremely wary about the admission of relics into his collection and those he has have passed the most gruelling tests of authenticity. Here one finds a white kid glove that Lincoln wore at a Presidential Reception and split at the thumb when he gave a genuine Sangamon County handshake to an old Illinois friend. It was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Jesse K. Dubois, Lincoln's Springfield neighbor, close personal and political friend and pallbearer. It was acquired from Jesse's son, Lincoln Dubois, last surviving member of the family. Other items are: A play bill of Ford's Theatre for the night Lincoln was shot, with the imprint of "E. Polkinhorn & Son"; a linen bandage used at Lincoln's deathbed presented by the President's family physician, Dr. Robert K. Stone, to Lincoln's pastor, Rev. Dr. P. D.



Lincoln & Herndon law books in Townsend Collection.

Gurley, and acquired from Dr. Gurley's daughter, Mrs. Emma Gurley Adams; an ancient wooden trunk covered with undressed cowhide, which Lincoln filled with wearing apparel and other personal belongings and carried over to the home of his wife's first cousin, Elizabeth Grimsley, a few evenings before he left for Washington in February, 1861. Upon the death of "Cousin Lizzie," it became the property of her son, John Todd Grimsley, and was acquired from him.

Another interesting relic is a large, elaborately engraved sheet of parchment in its original brown and gold frame, which certifies that: "His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln, Pres't of U. S. A., is constituted a Life Director of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This certificate was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Corp. William H. Hughes, a member of the 7th Independent Company, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, which served as Lincoln's bodyguard. This outfit kept up its organization for many years after the War, holding annual roll calls on the White House lawn. With this relic, Mr. Townsend also has Corp. Hughes' silk fringed "Lincoln's Bodyguard" badge and his honorable discharge from military service signed by Andrew Johnson, September 6, 1865.

From the size, value and rarity of the Townsend collection, one would naturally suppose that the owner had devoted to this undertaking all the leisure hours he could snatch from the law practice in which he has been all these years, and is now, so actively engaged. But the fact is, in addition to collecting Lincolniana, Mr. Townsend also has found time for research and writing which have achieved for him a notable distinction in the field of Lincoln authorship. Doubtless this love of research—this deep delving into legal archives and newspaper files, musty bundles of old letters and manuscripts—is directly responsible for the important historical discoveries which Townsend has from time to time unearthed and published. It was this relentless lawyer-like quest for facts—all the facts—that revealed the law suit in

the Fayette Circuit Court in which Lincoln so completely vindicated himself upon the charge that he had embezzled his client's money, and which also located a sheaf of his letters to his Lexington lawyer in an attic desk unopened for seventy years.

To the same methodical investigation may also be attributed the story of the arrest of Lincoln during the Indiana years on a warrant charging a violation of Kentucky law in the illegal operation of a ferry, his trial and acquittal in the Kentucky Court of Squire Samuel Pate; the vital revelation of Lincoln's firsthand contacts with the institution of slavery during his long visits to Lexington, his wife's home town; and the discovery of Lincoln's hitherto unknown affiliation with a church organization. This and other new material about the Great Emancipator have been related by Townsend in many newspaper and magazine articles and in his books: *Abraham Lincoln, Defendant*. 1923; *Lincoln, the Litigant*. 1925; *Lincoln and his Wife's Home Town*. 1929; and *Lincoln and Liquor*. 1934.

In fulfillment of a promise to Dr. Barton in his last illness, Townsend completed Barton's unfinished *President Lincoln*, in 1932 and wrote the preface. Referring to this undertaking, *The New York Times Book Review*, February 12, 1933, in its review of the book, observed: "Mr. Townsend has himself made important contributions to the Lincoln bibliography, and his present chapters have a literary distinction which calls for special praise."

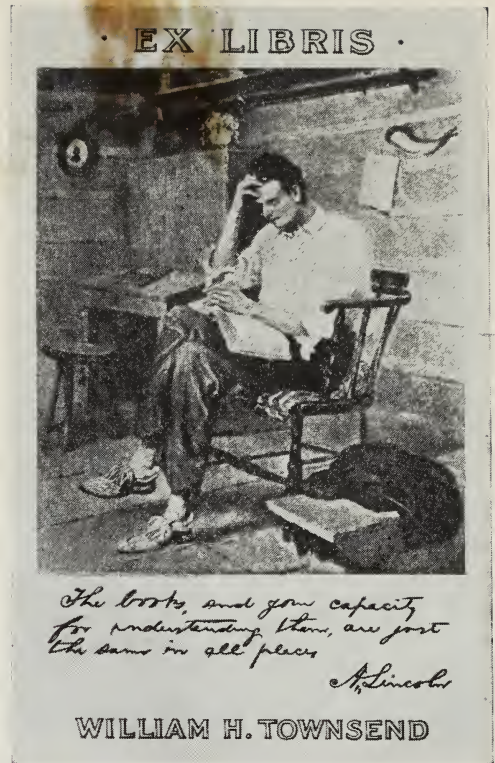
Townsend, during his years of Lincoln work below the Mason & Dixon line, has had some occasion to be reminded of the Biblical observation about the honor of a prophet in his own country. He good-naturedly accepts the "quips", of friends who know his "rebel" antecedents and his lifelong affiliation with the Democratic Party. They also "josh" him over communications which come from Republicans far and near, who—assuming Townsend to be a staunch member of their Party—invite him to make political speeches at Lincoln Day Dinners. He has

skirmished sharply and effectively, now and then, with various anti-Lincoln "die-hards" still left south of the Ohio River. And there are two persons very near his heart who have never read a line of anything he has ever written concerning Lincoln!

On a bleak winter night in the tragic '60's, two teen-age girls carried their three-year old brother, Oliver, from the family's burning dwelling — surrounded by "Yankee" Home Guards, who claimed that "rebel" soldiers had been harbored within its walls. These two aunts of William H. Townsend are still living—one 96, the other 93—but the name of Abraham Lincoln has never been mentioned once between these dear, "unreconstructed," old ladies and their favorite nephew—the only son of their deceased and only brother. One of them has a little shoe box in which she has carefully collected newspaper references to her nephew since his college days, but there is no clipping that contains the faintest hint of his interest or authorship in the Lincoln field!

"Bill" Townsend—a natural born raconteur—with his compact build, ruddy complexion and hair now white, prematurely gray since his late twenties, is a striking figure in any group. Possessed of the keen sense of humor and warm sympathies of his Welsh-Irish ancestry, unusual felicity of speech saturated with the picturesque and forceful imagery of his beloved Salt River, he is at his best when sitting around informally with friends, depicting some colorful character of his native village or relating Lincoln anecdotes and his own adventures in the Lincoln country that he has travelled so extensively with Barton, Beveridge and other noted authors.

Townsend warmly cherishes his long friend-



Townsend bookplate. Inscription is a sentence in facsimile from Lincoln's letter, Nov. 5, 1855, to Isham Reavis.

ship with Carl Sandburg. The two get together whenever possible. After one such occasion, Sandburg writes this note: "Dear Bill—Your pint of Kentucky Tavern is not half finished, but I will remember you long after it is gone. That was a grand afternoon of talk, many fragments of it sticking close with me now. Good going to you. As always, Carl."

Since the Great Emancipator was himself a Kentuckian, it is particularly fitting that this nationally known Lincoln scholar and his fine collection should be located at Lexington, the old home town of Mary Todd Lincoln.



A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The Story of William H. Townsend's Great
Collection of Lincolniana, at
Lexington, Kentucky

By
J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

Reprinted from THE LINCOLN HERALD, February, 1943. Vol. XLV, No. 1
Harrogate, Tennessee

A KENTUCKY LINCOLNIAN

The story of William H. Townsend's great collection of Lincolniana at Lexington, Kentucky.

By J. WINSTON COLEMAN, JR.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR'S big bay horse, hitched to a sturdy side-bar buggy with steel-tired wheels, swung with long easy strides down the narrow, dusty turnpike a few miles from the village of Glensboro, Kentucky. The doctor's little boy—clad in a shirt of figured calico, cottonade breeches, buck-eye hat—his bare feet propped against the old, battered medicine case—sat beside his father on the vehicle's low leather seat.

At the forks of the road the doctor pulled up the big bay to chat with a farmer digging post holes in a fence row. He had just

unearthed a ten pound cannon ball, which had been fired from the opposite ridge forty years before in the bloody skirmish of Chesh-er's Store on the eve of the battle of Perryville. To the farmer, this find was just another piece of junk. He was quite willing to sell it—thought it "oughta be wuth a dime." As the buggy rattled off down the ridge, the doctor's little boy held the rusty relic very close beside him. A new collector had been born!

It was about this time that William H. (called "Bill" then and now) Townsend,

William H. Townsend in his law office reading Lincoln & Herndon's Illinois Statutes.



proud owner of the old cannon ball, started a scrapbook which vividly reflected his family background and environment. At the outbreak of the Civil War his two grandfathers and other kinsmen—all slave owners—had, without exception, espoused the Southern cause. The Salt River valley in Anderson County, where young Townsend lived, was thickly populated with elderly veterans of Morgan's Cavalry. At election time the village postmaster—an old Union soldier—regularly cast the one vote which prevented the Glensboro precinct from going unanimously Democratic. It is, therefore, not surprising, as one thumbs today the yellowed pages of this old ledger, that the first item Townsend pasted in his scrapbook was a picture of his boyhood idol, Robert E. Lee, and that the newspaper clippings which follow, relate entirely to published reminiscences of Confederate exploits!

It was not until 1919 that "Bill" Townsend, then practicing law in Lexington, Kentucky, purchased his first Lincoln book in a second-hand store at Asheville, N. C., a worn copy of Francis T. Miller's *The Portrait Life of Lincoln*. A year later he acquired another item: *The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln*, by Dr. William E. Barton, and on November 16, 1920, the author received this copy through the mail, with the request that he autograph it for the owner. Little did this noted Lincoln scholar dream that some day the dedication page of one of his most important books, *The Lineage of Lincoln*, would read: "To my friend, William H. Townsend, who has traveled with me over thousands of the miles that made this book possible and who knows the labor, adventures, disappointments and occasional rejoicings which our pilgrimages extending over several years have brought."

As Dr. Barton inscribed the *Paternity* for his new correspondent, he was particularly glad to make contact with a resident of Lexington, Kentucky. He had just made a futile search in Mercer County for the descendants of Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks, the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln.

Examination of records in Washington showed that Sparrow, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, had cashed his last pension check in Lexington, county seat of Fayette County, in the autumn of 1840. By finding Mr. Townsend, a lawyer who knew the people and court records of Fayette County, Dr. Barton hoped to find the Sparrows—and so it turned out, but not in the way the Doctor anticipated.

The Sparrow records and Lincoln's maternal kinsmen were not in Lexington or Fayette County. These relatives still lived on the soil their forebears had wrested from the wilderness—that section of Mercer County which had been cut off to form a part of Anderson, when the latter county was created in 1827. For more than thirty years, Oliver L. Townsend—the country doctor—was their family physician. He had stood at the deathbeds of two of Nancy Hanks' half-brothers, one of her half-sisters and had brought into the world many of Abraham Lincoln's cousins—including one set of twin double cousins of the Great Emancipator.

It was this acquaintance with Dr. Barton and journeys with Barton back to the Sparrow country in Anderson County that definitely started "Bill" Townsend on the road to Lincoln research and the making of a collection of Lincolniana, which now numbers more than twenty-five hundred items. This collection consists of practically all the rare campaign "Lives"; letters, documents and manuscripts written by Lincoln, his partners and associates; original volumes owned by Lincoln and his law firms; oil portraits—one of Mary Todd during her girlhood in Lexington painted by her niece, Katherine Helm—one of Mrs. Lincoln's father, Robert S. Todd, by the noted Kentucky artist, Matthew Jouett, which hung in the old Todd residence when Lincoln came to visit there with his family.

There are original photographs—one autographed by Lincoln and certified by his Secretary, John Hay; another of Willie Lincoln, which Mrs. Lincoln, after his death in the White House, autographed: "Our Willie"

and presented to the picturesque Kentuckian, Cassius M. Clay; daguerreotypes — one of Lincoln's step-sister, Matilda Johnston, and her son, John J. Hall, which hung over the bed in which Lincoln's step-mother died in the old cabin on Goose Nest Prairie, Illinois; books, pamphlets, engravings and etchings, bronze statuettes, busts, plaster casts, relics, broadsides, scrapbooks—two from the famous Oldroyd collection—and other interesting miscellaneous items which overflow both the Townsend residence and his law offices.

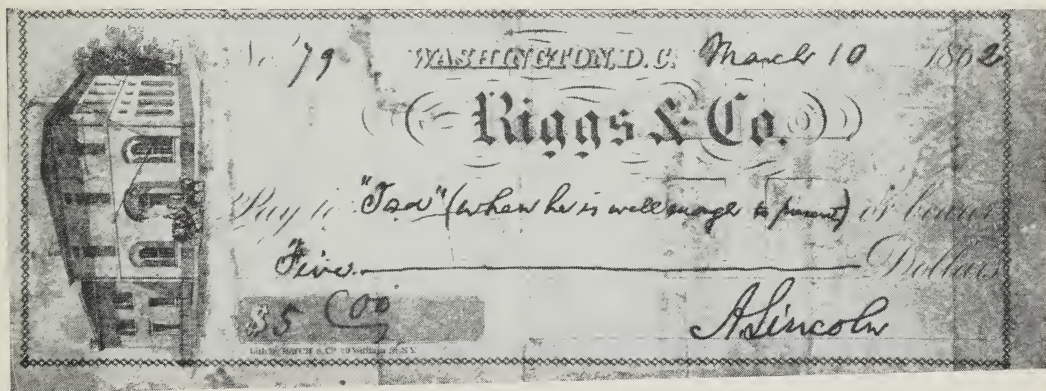
The original autograph material in this collection includes the signature of Thomas Lincoln, which is so rare that this specimen and one other are the only signatures of Abraham Lincoln's father in any public or private collection; the original deed executed by Lincoln's step-mother, Sarah Lincoln, and his step-brother, John D. Johnston, to John J. Hall, conveying the two forty-acre tracts of land about which Lincoln sharply wrote Johnston on November 25, 1851, saying: "Mother" has "already let you take that, hook and line."

Here also are the letters that Lincoln wrote his Lexington attorney, George B. Kinkead, about the litigation in which, for the only time in his life, his personal integrity was assailed, one letter reading: "I find it difficult to suppress my indignation toward those who have got up this claim against me"; the penciled note Lincoln wrote Douglas when one of their separate speaking dates accidentally collided at Sullivan, Illinois, following the

Fourth Joint Debate at Charleston and a riot occurred between the Lincoln and Douglas factions; the letter to Kentucky's great statesman, John J. Crittenden, that Lincoln wrote the day after he had lost the Senatorial race to Douglas, which contains the oft-quoted paragraph: "The emotions of defeat at the close of a struggle in which I felt more than a merely selfish interest, and to which defeat the use of your name contributed largely, are fresh upon me; but even in this mood I cannot for a moment suspect you of anything dishonorable"; and the letter Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Deziah Vance on June 9, 1860—his last as a lawyer—in which he says: "I never keep anybody's money an hour longer than I can find a chance to turn it over to him."

The document which Townsend cherishes above all others in his collection grew out of one of the most moving incidents of Lincoln's life in the White House. In February, 1862, the Union's darkest hour, President Lincoln's two little sons, Willie, 11, and "Tad," 9, fell ill. On February 20th, Willie died. The condition of "Tad," remained critical and Lincoln, in an agony of grief and anxiety, sat by his bedside night and day. In a few weeks "Tad" was slowly, fretfully convalescing, but the cares of state bore heavier than ever on the President's weary, stooped shoulders.

On March 8th, the armored Confederate Ram, "Merrimac," practically destroyed the Union Fleet at Hampton Roads. The Federal cause seemed doomed. On the morning



Lincoln's check to "Tad."

of March 10th, Washington was hysterical over the news that the "first battle of the Ironclads" had been fought the previous day between the Merrimac and the "Yankee Cheesebox," the Monitor. Reports of the encounter were meager and conflicting. Lincoln had snatched a few moments from the telegraph office for an important conference with a delegation from the border States concerning his recent message to Congress, urging Federal pecuniary aid to all slave States adopting gradual emancipation.

It had scarcely started, however, when the President's Secretary came in and quietly whispered to his chief. Lincoln excused himself and left the room. "Tad's" nurse stood in the hallway. "Mrs. Lincoln insists that I see you, sir," she said apologetically, "Tad won't take his medicine." Silently the President and the young woman in white muslin walked down the long corridor.

"You stay here," he said when they reached the sickroom, "and I'll see what I can do." Then he went inside, softly closing the door behind him. He was gone only a few minutes and came out smiling broadly. The old twinkle flashed again from beneath his dark, shaggy brows. "It's all right now," he announced cheerily, "Tad and I have fixed things up." Then he hurried back to his conference.

The nurse entered the room. From the depth of the pillows "Tad's" wan, little face was beaming. Clutched in his small, thin hands was a bank check which read:

"Pay to 'Tad' (when he is well enough to present) Five Dollars." It was signed: "A. Lincoln."

With this original check, Townsend has also Robert T. Lincoln's letter presenting it to Mr. C. C. P. Holden, of Chicago, on March 25, 1870. Recently the eminent Lincoln collector and authority, Judge James W. Bollinger, wrote Townsend: "I think your check 'to Tad when he gets well' is the most interesting thing yet found above Lincoln's signature. Really, if I owned it, I would not trade it for the Hooker letter. And I often think of it."

For many years there has been much speculation among Lincolnians as to the circumstances under which Jesse Weik became the owner of that vast quantity of Lincoln-Herndon manuscripts recently sold to the Library of Congress for \$65,000.00. Not long ago Townsend discovered and acquired Herndon's letter to Weik, dated June 7, 1889, which contains the answer to this long standing query. "I will sell you," writes Herndon to Weik, "all of my right, title and interest in & to the whole of the Lincoln records, including letters, evidences, proofs, affidavits, etc. etc. for one hundred dollars cash paid down. I greatly need the money or would not say cash paid down. . . . The records—the materials etc. will be of great value in the future & will be a kind of fortune to you. I have no place to keep the things—am old. . . . I said once I would do something for you and I do it now in this proposition. Twenty-five years of toil for \$100 is nothing."

The Townsend collection is particularly rich in associate volumes. They cover well Lincoln's life from those nights by the Indiana fireside to that tragic Good Friday evening at the White House. First to be noticed is the original volume which, as biographers agree, profoundly influenced the youthful Lincoln during the formative Indiana years—his first law book—David Turnham's copy of the *Revised Laws of Indiana*. In this book Lincoln read for the first time the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the first State Constitution of Indiana. Also the Ordinance of the Northwest Territory, which contained the provision: "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, other than in the punishment of crimes." Beveridge says: "Through this volume Lincoln acquired a fair understanding of the elements of law and government." Tarbell says: "He did not merely read the documents in the Revised Statutes, he studied them, pondered them, saturated himself with them."

Pasted inside of the front cover of the "Revised Laws" is William H. Herndon's

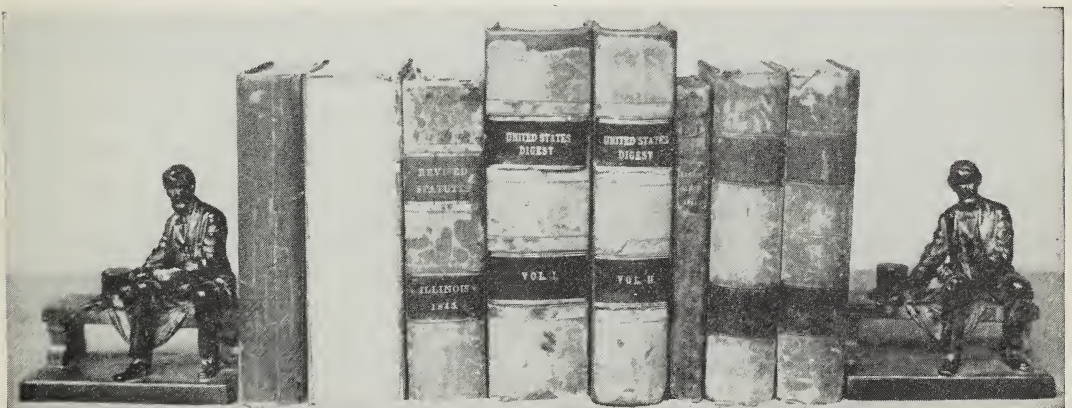
"History of this book", relating how the volume was given to him by David Turnham when "in the year 1865 I was in Spencer County, Indiana, Lincoln's old home, gathering up the facts of young Abraham's life." Laid in are three autograph letters written by David Turnham to Herndon in the fall of 1865, referring to the "old Law book that I had when Abe and I were associates."

Side by side with the "First Law Book" are half a dozen books from the law library of Lincoln & Herndon autographed for the firm by the junior partner. One of these, which also belonged to the firm of Logan & Lincoln, has a "book-mark" torn from a sheet of paper on which Lincoln has written a list of legal authorities. In addition to these law books, is the second volume of the *Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana*, on the inside front cover of which Lincoln has made notations in ink and also written: "A. Lincoln. Springfield, Ill. 1852." Another choice item is a copy of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, inscribed and presented by Lincoln to his old friend, "Capt. Job Fletcher."

When the *New York World's* correspondent sat down in the Executive office of the White House after Lincoln's funeral, he noticed three books lying on the President's desk, a parliamentary manual by Charles Lanman, and two books of humor, one by Orpheus C. Kerr and the other by Artemus Ward. The Lanman book inscribed: "For His Excellency, President Lincoln, with the

compliments of the author" and autographed on the same page "Hon. I. N. Arnold from Robert T. Lincoln. Nov. 8th, 1871," is now in the Townsend collection. Close beside this volume, Townsend keeps an envelope postmarked "Cleveland, O." and addressed to "Hon. John Sherman, U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.," which Andrew Johnson's private secretary, W. G. Moore, found on Lincoln's desk when the new President moved into the White House. Across the face of this old envelope, in a clear bold hand, Lincoln has written in ink two words, which to this day are unexplained: "*Personal Beauty*"!

Townsend is extremely wary about the admission of relics into his collection and those he has have passed the most gruelling tests of authenticity. Here one finds a white kid glove that Lincoln wore at a Presidential Reception and split at the thumb when he gave a genuine Sangamon County handshake to an old Illinois friend. It was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Jesse K. Dubois, Lincoln's Springfield neighbor, close personal and political friend and pallbearer. It was acquired from Jesse's son, Lincoln Dubois, last surviving member of the family. Other items are: A play bill of Ford's Theatre for the night Lincoln was shot, with the imprint of "E. Polkinhorn & Son"; a linen bandage used at Lincoln's deathbed presented by the President's family physician, Dr. Robert K. Stone, to Lincoln's pastor, Rev. Dr. P. D.



Lincoln & Herndon law books in Townsend Collection.

Gurley, and acquired from Dr. Gurley's daughter, Mrs. Emma Gurley Adams; an ancient wooden trunk covered with undressed cowhide, which Lincoln filled with wearing apparel and other personal belongings and carried over to the home of his wife's first cousin, Elizabeth Grimsley, a few evenings before he left for Washington in February, 1861. Upon the death of "Cousin Lizzie," it became the property of her son, John Todd Grimsley, and was acquired from him.

Another interesting relic is a large, elaborately engraved sheet of parchment in its original brown and gold frame, which certifies that: "His Excellency, Abraham Lincoln, Pres't of U. S. A., is constituted a Life Director of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This certificate was presented by Mrs. Lincoln to Corp. William H. Hughes, a member of the 7th Independent Company, Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, which served as Lincoln's bodyguard. This outfit kept up its organization for many years after the War, holding annual roll calls on the White House lawn. With this relic, Mr. Townsend also has Corp. Hughes' silk fringed "Lincoln's Bodyguard" badge and his honorable discharge from military service signed by Andrew Johnson, September 6, 1865.

From the size, value and rarity of the Townsend collection, one would naturally suppose that the owner had devoted to this undertaking all the leisure hours he could snatch from the law practice in which he has been all these years, and is now, so actively engaged. But the fact is, in addition to collecting Lincolniana, Mr. Townsend also has found time for research and writing which have achieved for him a notable distinction in the field of Lincoln authorship. Doubtless this love of research—this deep delving into legal archives and newspaper files, musty bundles of old letters and manuscripts—is directly responsible for the important historical discoveries which Townsend has from time to time unearthed and published. It was this relentless lawyer-like quest for facts—all the facts—that revealed the law suit in

the Fayette Circuit Court in which Lincoln so completely vindicated himself upon the charge that he had embezzled his client's money, and which also located a sheaf of his letters to his Lexington lawyer in an attic desk unopened for seventy years.

To the same methodical investigation may also be attributed the story of the arrest of Lincoln during the Indiana years on a warrant charging a violation of Kentucky law in the illegal operation of a ferry, his trial and acquittal in the Kentucky Court of Squire Samuel Pate; the vital revelation of Lincoln's firsthand contacts with the institution of slavery during his long visits to Lexington, his wife's home town; and the discovery of Lincoln's hitherto unknown affiliation with a church organization. This and other new material about the Great Emancipator have been related by Townsend in many newspaper and magazine articles and in his books: *Abraham Lincoln, Defendant*. 1923; *Lincoln, the Litigant*. 1925; *Lincoln and his Wife's Home Town*. 1929; and *Lincoln and Liquor*. 1934.

In fulfillment of a promise to Dr. Barton in his last illness, Townsend completed Barton's unfinished *President Lincoln*, in 1932 and wrote the preface. Referring to this undertaking, *The New York Times Book Review*, February 12, 1933, in its review of the book, observed: "Mr. Townsend has himself made important contributions to the Lincoln bibliography, and his present chapters have a literary distinction which calls for special praise."

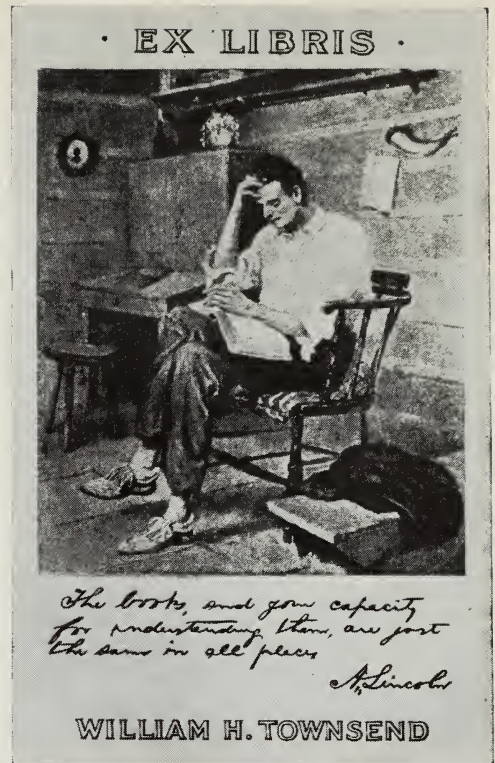
Townsend, during his years of Lincoln work below the Mason & Dixon line, has had some occasion to be reminded of the Biblical observation about the honor of a prophet in his own country. He good-naturedly accepts the "quips", of friends who know his "rebel" antecedents and his lifelong affiliation with the Democratic Party. They also "josh" him over communications which come from Republicans far and near, who—assuming Townsend to be a staunch member of their Party—invite him to make political speeches at Lincoln Day Dinners. He has

skirmished sharply and effectively, now and then, with various anti-Lincoln “die-hards” still left south of the Ohio River. And there are two persons very near his heart who have never read a line of anything he has ever written concerning Lincoln!

On a bleak winter night in the tragic ‘60’s, two teen-age girls carried their three-year old brother, Oliver, from the family’s burning dwelling—surrounded by “Yankee” Home Guards, who claimed that “rebel” soldiers had been harbored within its walls. These two aunts of William H. Townsend are still living—one 96, the other 93—but the name of Abraham Lincoln has never been mentioned once between these dear, “unreconstructed,” old ladies and their favorite nephew—the only son of their deceased and only brother. One of them has a little shoe box in which she has carefully collected newspaper references to her nephew since his college days, but there is no clipping that contains the faintest hint of his interest or authorship in the Lincoln field!

“Bill” Townsend—a natural born raconteur—with his compact build, ruddy complexion and hair now white, prematurely gray since his late twenties, is a striking figure in any group. Possessed of the keen sense of humor and warm sympathies of his Welsh-Irish ancestry, unusual felicity of speech saturated with the picturesque and forceful imagery of his beloved Salt River, he is at his best when sitting around informally with friends, depicting some colorful character of his native village or relating Lincoln anecdotes and his own adventures in the Lincoln country that he has travelled so extensively with Barton, Beveridge and other noted authors.

Townsend warmly cherishes his long friend-



Townsend bookplate. Inscription is a sentence in facsimile from Lincoln's letter, Nov. 5, 1855, to Isham Reavis.

ship with Carl Sandburg. The two get together whenever possible. After one such occasion, Sandburg writes this note: “Dear Bill—Your pint of Kentucky Tavern is not half finished, but I will remember you long after it is gone. That was a grand afternoon of talk, many fragments of it sticking close with me now. Good going to you. As always, Carl.”

Since the Great Emancipator was himself a Kentuckian, it is particularly fitting that this nationally known Lincoln scholar and his fine collection should be located at Lexington, the old home town of Mary Todd Lincoln.

